Corner: UNEP/ SETAC Life Cycle Initiative

Start of the next phase: Task forces and potential future crosscutting activities

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Announcement: Meeting of the Working Groups (2 December 2003 in Lausanne, Switzerland)

Venue: Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, from 3.30–6.30 p.m.

The event will be held the day before the Joint SETAC Europe and ISIE meeting 11th LCA Case Studies Symposium and 2003 European ISIE Meeting.

Background: On 30 October 2003, the UNEP/ SETAC Life Cycle Initiative has sent out the invitations to apply for the Task Forces. The establishment of the Task Forces can be seen as a new phase in the Life Cycle Initiative. The proposed Task Forces have emerged from a year-long process which included the Definition Studies with a global User Needs Survey and an international process of drafting, peer review, and discussions at multiple international workshops. Beginning of November, the draft finals of the Definition Studies will be posted on the Initiative's website http://www.uneptie.org/pc/sustain/lcinitiative/
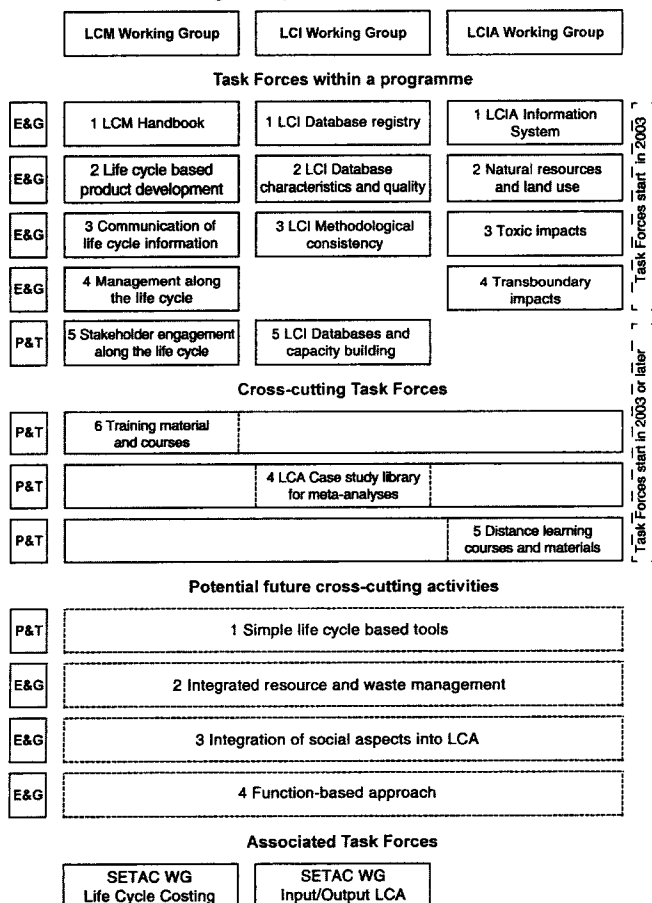
The aim of the cross-cutting activities is to address questions in relation to life cycle approaches that have been identified as relevant in the overall user needs assessment, but that have not been further developed as part of the Definition Studies since they include topics that concern more than one programme. As a first step such Task Forces would have to prepare a feasibility study on the particular topic, then based on the findings a concrete workplan could be established. The following cross-cutting Task Forces are under discussion:

- ❑ Integrated resource and waste management,
- ❑ Integration of social aspects into LCA,
- ❑ Function-Based Approach,
- ❑ Simple life cycle based tools.

Main points for discussion: The plenary session will give general information on progress of the initiative with regard to the Task Forces. The potential future crosscutting activities will be the main points for discussion. One breakout group will deal with LCIA; there will be no breakout groups for the other two programmes since these other programmes only recently had events already (LCI workshop in Karlsruhe, 20–21 Oct.; and LCM workshops in Seattle and Stockholm, 26 and 29–30 Sept.).

Registration: Please, start registration by sending an email to sc@unep.fr providing your full contact details. The number of places might be restricted.

Overview of Working Groups and Task Forces

Types of Task Forces:
E&G Experience-sharing and guidance-oriented Task Forces (or 'guidance' TF)
P&T Practice and training-oriented Task Forces (or 'practice' TF)

Participation in Working Groups and Task Forces

If you are interested in participating in one of the Task Forces (TFs) you must be member of one of the Initiative's Working Groups (WGs) on LCM, LCI or LCIA and fill in the expression of interest questionnaire. You can get the questionnaire, together with a background document describing the general TF procedures and the Terms of References (ToRs) for the different TFs, from sc@unep.fr or the Initiative's website. (You can still join a WG by filling in your personal information and selecting one WG, a job that WG member does not have to do anymore, if the data has remained unchanged.) You have the option to apply for three TFs with different preference.

A distinction is made between TFs aiming at experience-sharing and guidance (short: 'guidance'), and TFs aiming at practice and training (short: 'practice'). In principle, each TF will consist of about 10 persons. For the guidance TFs, the main criteria for selection of members will be experience in the given field, and available time. Moreover, a certain regional and stakeholder representation is needed. For the practice TFs global representation and stakeholder representation are as important criteria for selection as expertise. The aim is to reach a balance. With regard to the available time, a working contribution of about two weeks per year is seen as a reference for both types of TFs.

The deadline for submission of the questionnaire for the expressions of interest is 24 November 2003. In this way, the programme of the TFs together with a proposal of a starting group of around 5 members can be discussed at the next meeting of the International Life Cycle Panel (ILCP) meeting on 5 December in Paris. Completion of the membership of the TFs may take somewhat longer, in order to allow to reach out for global and stakeholder balance and for possibly missing expertise.

UNEP/ SETAC Partners

UNEP/ SETAC partners in the Life Cycle Initiative are AIST (National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology), Japan, Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE), Association of Plastics Manufacturers in Europe (APME), International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), General Motors, Governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland, and the CIRAIG/ Governments of Quebec and Canada.